



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Reducing Poverty and Increasing Capacity for Rice Cooperatives in Liberia



USADF

Kokoyah Multipurpose Cooperative Society supplies the World Food Program in Liberia with parboiled rice to support local school feeding programs.

Joe Wonzon, a rice farmer in Nimba County, Liberia, farms about one hectare of swampland to survive. Like the 84 percent of Liberians who live on less than \$1.25 per day, Wonzon struggles to afford one of Liberia's most important staple foods, rice.

Liberia, a West African nation of four million people, struggles with self-sufficiency in rice production. Though rice is the main staple crop of Liberia, with more than 80 percent of farmers growing it, Liberians rely on expensive imported rice for daily consumption. When food prices spike, the increased cost of rice puts the most vulnerable people in Liberia at risk for food insecurity.

To address this problem, the [U.S. African Development Foundation](#) (USADF) is working under Feed the Future to help 900 smallholder rice farmers, including Wonzon, to boost rice production, incomes, and household nutrition. USADF investments are supporting five local farming cooperative grants to increase rice productivity and accessibility to markets so that smallholder farmers like Wonzon are less impacted by high food prices.

These Feed the Future grants help local farming cooperatives improve their operations in a variety of ways. Farmers learn financial management skills, are trained in how to navigate regulatory systems in the rice industry, and can access technical assistance to improve their rice production. The grants can also be used as start-up capital for processing equipment such as rice mills, warehouses, and transport, and can support farmers in expanding their linkages to rice markets.

The Kokoyah Multipurpose Cooperative Society, one of USADF's five grant recipients for rice production in Liberia, is a 400-member cooperative in Bong County. This grant helped the cooperative acquire better transportation to access markets and secure a contract to sell directly to the World Food Program in Liberia.

Kokoyah's parboiled rice is used as part of a country-wide school feeding program that supports children whose families suffer from high food prices. Low school attendance and a wide gender gap in primary education are linked to high levels of food insecurity and undernutrition in parts of Liberia.

Thanks to Feed the Future, more than 4,500 family and community members in Bong, Nimba and Lofa Counties in Liberia will increase their capacity to improve rice yields now and into the future.